TO A DISTANT FRIEND.

BY SALLIE M. BRYAN.

We left a scene of light,
Where all seem'd calm and fair,
Where music lull'd the night
And perfume steeped the air;
Where—while sweet dreams and soft
Within my heart would rise—
I'd gazed—perchance too oft—
Down in thy dark-blue eyes.

When black the midnight frowned,
Fiercely the trees were tossed
And wildly wailed around
The winds, like spirits lost
I shuddered at the change
And strove to smile—in vain,
For shadows, cold and strange,
Oppress my heart and brain.

I looked into the gloom
And thought of Pleasure's glare,
And—the eternal doom
Of those whose *all* was there.
How, when they left its light,
Its music and its flowers,
To enter Death's long night
They'd shrink from its dark hours!

I told thee—ah, too true
Had been the thing I feared!
For, by its tones, I knew
Thy splendid life but sneered,
"Wouldst thou then waste each breath
Where such illusion gleams?"
"Ay—for the night of Death
Is without dawn or dreams!"

Strange that a soul so high
Can deem its fate so low!
For in thy mystic eye
The fires of genius glow;
And to its shaded hue
The tears as quick can rush
As rain-drops from the blue
Of April-skies will gush.

Oh, far-off one and bright,
Though we may meet no more
This side the glory-light
Of the eternal shore—
And though thou scarce hast given
One ray of Hope to me—
Well—there's a God in Heaven,
And I can pray for thee!

A PLAIN STORY.

"Once upon a time," as the old fairy stories used to say, a young New England farmer, George Challoner by name, found himself, at the age of twenty-one, strong in mind and limbs, with no mean share of good looks, and a handsome farm of one hundred acres, pasture land, stock, barns and house included—all his own, without let, hindrance, or incumbrance. His parents were dead—there were no brothers or sisters to dispute the inheritance with him—he had no private sorrow as a drawback, though he had mourned for his dead father in a hearty, earnest way. His mother died in giving him birth, and though he missed her often, the loss could not embitter his life. So there he stood upon the threshold of life, simple in his tastes, pure-hearted, generous and ardent. What more could he desire?

Something was wanting, however. It was the old story which has been told ever since the days of the Garden of Eden—"It is not good for man to be alone"—and Adam missed his Eve. He was in a position to marry, and though his servants were diligent enough about the house, he fancied a wife's hand would be worth them all. The thought had crossed him often, and as he leaned upon his farm-yard gate one pleasant evening in the Spring of 1820, he mused of nothing else. He knew well whom he would like to bring under the shadow of his vine and fig-tree, whose voice would be the sweetest, and whose foot the lightest, as she filled the place which had been vacant since his mother's death. He walked slowly down to the house, chewing a sprig of birch the while, and having given all necessary orders for the night, called for hot water, and betook himself to his own room. When he issued forth, some half an hour later, he was shaved carefully, his curling brown hair was brushed to the last degree of nicety, and he wore his Sunday suit of fine blue homespun, with bell-buttons of brass. There was a stir throughout the household when he ordered his switch-tailed mare, and the servant-girls grinned knowingly when they saw him gather a "posy" for his button-hole, and mount and ride away.

"The Squire's goin' a-courtin', as sure as eggs!" said the oldest of the three; and forthwith, with all Mother Eve's (and perhaps a little of Father Adam's) curiosity, they mounted to his vacant bedroom, and watched from the window to see which way he took. The switch-tailed mare turned to the right, and they all burst out laughing.

"He's going to Squire Dunham's, sure enough. I thought the new ribbon in Lizzie's bonnet wa'n't for nothin'," said the good dame, oracularly, as they descended the stairs. "And a prettier gal, or a better one, he never could have picked out, if he had tried till he was as gray as a rat. They say she has got a sight of coverlids and blankets spun in the oak press in her room."

Meanwhile the young "Squire" jogged on, quite unconscious of the interest his proceedings had excited at home. Long before the moon rose he saw a neat red farm-house standing on a little hill beside the road, and his heart leaped into his mouth. It was the first time he had made his appearance there as a regular suitor for the daughter's hand, and what would she—what would Lizzie say?

"I'll be shot if it isn't worse than mowing all day in the four-acre lot, where the thistles are as thick as the grass, if not thicker," the poor fellow muttered, wiping his forehead, as he rode up to the horse-block and dismounted.

A half-grown lad of thirteen—the farmer's only son—leaning against the gate of the front yard, and whistling idly, lounged forward to take his horse, and informed him in answer to his inquiries that "the Squire and his wife had gone to a wedding in the neighboring town, and would not be back for two or three hours," and that there was no one at home except "him and Lizzie and the baby." It was glad news for the young farmer, and he hurried into the house without knocking, and lifting the latch of the kitchen door, saw a sight that transfixed him for a moment where he stood.

His lady-love, a pretty little black-haired, black-eyed girl of seventeen or eighteen, sat in a low chair before the fire, rocking softly to and fro, and singing in a low voice to the baby on her knee. The child's fair face nestled close against her breast, and one little hand, held in hers, touched her rosy cheek. It was a pretty picture, and as he gazed upon it something stirred and woke into life within his breast—a sweet hope of watching it once again—but in his own house, upon his own hearth, and when the girl should wear a plain gold ring upon her finger, and sing the lullaby to his own child and hers.

The noise of the opening door disturbed her, and she put out her hand with a warning—

"Hush, Willie, you will wake the baby," as if she fancied her brother had entered. But the stillness that succeeded made her look around, and seeing the blue eyes of George Challoner fixed upon her, the blood flashed into her face, and motioning him to her seat, she went softly into an inner room, and came back in a moment or two, having left the baby sound asleep in bed. Perhaps she had profited by her absence to brush her wavy black hair; at all events she spied the unusual smartness of her visitor's attire in an instant, and her woman's instinct told her all. Sunday after Sunday those blue eyes had met hers, in the gallery of the old village "meeting-house;" they had looked over the same singing-book, too, and she fancied tenor and alto never sounded so well together before; in short, Miss Lizzie had had some thoughts of George Challoner for more than two or three months; but now that he had fairly begun to "keep company," the mischievous woman's nature within prompted her to feign to misunderstand the object of his visit.

She took her wheel and sat down at a little distance from him, after they had shaken hands, and told him she was afraid he wanted to see her father, particularly—"it was too bad he had gone to the wedding."

"No," said poor George, growing very red in the face, "it wasn't exactly your father that I came to see."

"Oh, I didn't know. I heard him say he was going to ride down your way, to ask you for some sweet corn. Perhaps you wanted to ask my mother about her wool, Mr. Challoner?"

Here George thought he saw an opportunity of conveying his meaning through a harmless joke.

"It wasn't about the wool, Miss Lizzie—I believe we have got plenty at home—more than the girls will spin this year, I am afraid, unless they are smarter than they were last. But there is one thing I *should* like to see your mother about. I want to ask her if she could spare a *lamb*."

The moment he had uttered that speech, he would have given worlds to have been fifty miles away, the blushes burnt so upon Lizzie's face and his own. But she recovered first.

"Lambs, Mr. Challoner. I know she did have some this spring, but they almost all died. I don't believe she has more than one or two, now."

"And would she let one of them go?" he asked, eagerly.

"I—I am afraid not," she said, gravely, but as his countenance fell, the corners of her mouth quivered, and then she burst into a hearty fit of laughter, and added in the familiar tone she had often before used to him, "I think, George, you had better ask her yourself."

He needed no further encouragement, but drawing his chair close to hers, bent down and said something to her in a low voice that made her cheeks rosier than ever.

"Yes or No, Lizzie," he cried, and she answered in a very old-fashioned way, by leaning her pretty head against his shoulder, and reaching out a plump, strong little hand toward his. Then there was a long silence in the great kitchen. The walls were only plastered, and the wooden floor painted a dingy yellow—there were no finer ornaments upon the ceiling than some festoons of dried apple and pumpkin and a flitch or two of bacon—the furniture consisted only of deal chairs and a pine table painted red—while the blaze upon the stone hearth danced and flickered upon rows of tin and delf, ranged upon a dresser opposite, and yet I doubt very much if any palace ever held two happier hearts. They talked of the past winter—how they had often thought of each other in secret. Lizzie owned to being jealous of Jane Wheeler when George took her home one night from singing school, and George said he had wanted to "punch" John Hall's head, (for they did such things in 1820 as well as they do in 1859) that same night, for being so attentive to her, and that he only took Jane Wheeler because she lived near his own house, and would have had to walk;—he told her of the fine milch cows he had, and the foal of the switch-tailed mare, which had already been named "Lizzie," and which should be trained up by her now, for her own special use—and she talked of the stores of "household stuffs" her busy hands had already provided, and how her mother had given her two new feather beds, a set of gilt-edged crockery and some white-handled knives—against the time when she should marry.

"Which will be very soon," said George, roguishly, as he brought the red, smiling lips nearer his.

Time, alas! will not stand still, even for lovers. He glided swiftly along, this evening, quite unheeded. There came a ringing of sleigh bells on the keen night air, a halt—and a murmur of voices in the yard outside, which any reasonable people would have heard plainly. But the lovers were not reasonable, and the first intimation they had of an addition to their circle, was the flinging open of the door, while Willie's voice exclaimed, in astonished tones—

"Well, I never! Here's George Challoner with his arm round our Lizzie's waist, and I believe she likes it, too!"

They sprang to their feet, and Lizzie fled, laughing, into the bedroom, as she saw the puzzled faces of her father and mother and brother—and George, after looking helplessly around on every side, was forced to come forward and explain. What hand-shakings there were then, and how the mother brought out Lizzie in triumph, while Willie chuckled at the thought of the rides he should have on, and after, the switch-tailed mare! Never were people better satisfied—never was there a more joyous ride than that George Challoner took by the light of the young moon, at twelve o'clock that night, singing aloud in his content, till he reached his own home, and went to bed to dream of Lizzie.

People kept to the good old ways in 1820, and a farmer's daughter was not afraid of handling the broom or churn-dasher, though she might not know what kind of an animal a guitar was, or how many legs a piano went on. If ever the eye and handof a mistress were needed at George's home, it was during the planting and haying season; so with small delay, pretty little Lizzie gathered her stores together, and sent them to her future home, following herself, after she had stood in a white dress before the village pastor, a few moments, one sunny April afternoon, and promised to "love, honor and obey" the happy bridegroom at her side. There were no bridal tours in those sensible old days; the young wife rode quietly away from her father's house that evening, behind the switch-tailed mare, and early the next morning she was as busy as a bee, setting things to rights on the Challoner farm, as only a bride could do. It was the realization of the farmer's fondest dreams, the summer that succeeded. Lizzie's work indoors was worth that of a score of servants, and as for himself, the strength of a dozen men seemed in the hand that wielded spade, and hoe, and scythe, from early morning till the cows came lowing home at milking time. It was a pleasant place, and everything throve around it. No other farmer had such fine young steers, such noble oxen, such kindly cows, or such well-disposed sheep. George Challoner's hay always brought one or two dollars more per ton than that of his neighbors, and as for Lizzie's butter and cheese, they might almost have been sold for their weight in silver, if not in gold. They were good neighbors, kind to the poor, and steady church-goers, and the happiest people, I believe, that ever lived. There was but one drawback, and sometimes, as they sat by the kitchen fire after the work was all done, and the servants had gone to bed, they spoke of it together, not sadly, but seriously. For five years, winter and summer, they had dwelt together; the little child in Lizzie's first home had grown into a stout rosy-faced girl, but no baby had come to fill her place in Lizzie's arms, or to bring back the vision George Challoner saw in his mind's eye that Spring night. It would not do, however, to have a house without even a shadow of a "skeleton's closet" in it, and they did not repine. When, at last, their wish was granted, it was done in God's way, which is not like the ways of men.

Ten happy years had flown, during which the young couple had become more and more attached to each other, when Lizzie whispered something in her husband's ear one evening that made him start, turn round, and look at her a moment, and then clasp her fondly to his breast. She leaned her head upon his shoulder, as she had done in her father's kitchen so long before.

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At last the hour came to which they had been looking forward so long and so anxiously. As soon as George received permission to visit Lizzie from the doctor, he darted through the hall, and entering his own room very softly, stole up to the bed. Lizzie looked up. How pale she was; but then, again, how the sweet face flushed as he drew near!

"Oh, George, we have got a little boy!" she said, motioning the nurse away who came to forbid her talking. "Just look at him, and then I will go quietly to sleep."

She turned down the coverlid, and showed him a tiny little infant nestling at her breast—his dream had come true! He sank down on his knees, and kissing her, put his head beside the baby's on her breast, and wept—oh, such tears of joy! The nurse interposed (nurses don't believe in husbands!) but Lizzie's gentle voice stopped her.

"Not just yet. I can go to sleep better if George will hold my head upon his arm, and he will be very quiet now."

George was quiet at once, and took the post assigned him, while she closed her eyes with a look of perfect happiness. By and by the feeble arm was lifted; he bent his head, and it passed around his neck, and drew his lips down to hers. A moment, and it fell heavily. Was she asleep? Yes; but she slept the sleep that knows no waking!

It sometimes happens that a great and sudden sorrow stupefies the heart—else, I believe, we should go mad, or die, at once, so heavy are the crosses that our merciful Lord lays upon us, to draw us towards Him and His eternal home. And thus it was with George Challoner. He sat by the dead body of his wife like one in a dream. He followed her to the grave, and returned to his house and his motherless child, without shedding a tear. In good time, however, that relief came; and then people said he would "get over it." Ah! when one has once loved with heart and soul—loved truly, and honestly, and purely—do they ever "get over" the loss of that love?

A year passed away, and the weed upon his hat had grown rusty, and the child, with its dead mother's face, had learned to creep about the floor, and to try and talk, if talking it could be called. His father seldom smiled upon him, but he watched over him as the apple of his eye, and the little fellow crowed, and clapped his hands, whenever he saw him coming from the field. One night, after he had given him his parting kiss, and sent him away with his young nurse, he paused in his rapid walk up and down the room, and approaching the window, looked out upon the moonlit scene with a heavy sigh. It was the 18th of March—the anniversary of the night when he had first spoken to Lizzie about his love; and as he thought of her beside her father's hearth, the tears came into his eyes, and fell upon the casement where he leaned. A soft breath fanned his cheek, and, turning, he saw her beside him, looking at him with a melancholy smile. "Come to me at midnight," she whispered—and then he saw her no more. He rushed into his bedroom, but it was empty. He called her name—he wept and prayed—but all was silent. The clock struck nine. Three hours more to wait!

He sat down and wrote a long letter to his pastor, telling him what he had seen, and begging him, in case of his sudden death, to be a father to his son Walter, who would inherit all he possessed. Sealing it, he laid it where it could be plainly seen; and, after the clock struck eleven, stole softly out of the house, and took his way to the distant churchyard on the hill, where Lizzie was buried by the side of his own father and mother.

Missing him the next morning, and going to the clergyman with the letter for advice, they soon knew where to search for him. They found him sitting beside the grave, with his head bent down upon it—quite dead!

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It is a true story. I, who tell it, heard it from the lips of Walter Challoner himself? He was the little lover of my earliest school days, and he told me how his father died, while we knelt and planted daisies and violets upon his grave and Lizzie's, for the same sods cover them both! "They were lovely in their lives, and in their deaths they were not divided."

THE LITTLE SKELETON.

I announce myself to the reader as The Man who believes in Ghosts—perhaps. At any rate, I believe in my father, and he believed the story I am about to relate. My father was a Briton. He lived in England many years ago. He resided at Ipswich, and once had occasion to go to London upon business. It was during a period of great popular commotion, and the city being very full, he had some trouble in finding a lodging. The master of the house observed that it was a good, large room, (for he could get but one,) and very comfortable, if he did not mind—but there he stopped, for his wife gave him a nudge. That made my father suspect something was not quite right.

"It isn't over a slaughter-house, or a burial-ground, or a dissecting-room, is it?" says he.

"Oh dear, no," says the landlord; "but some people say the next house is haunted; and that anybody who sleeps in this room can see a lady in white, orying, at that window that you can see there."

"Oh! is that all?" says my father; "perhaps there's some poor maniac confined there. Whether or no, however, that's no objection, for I don't care a rush for all the ghosts that ever were invented."

Well, he took possession of the room, and before night closed in he had an opportunity of taking an accurate survey of the neighboring premises. A lead roof, apparently over a workshop, lay between his window and that where the ghost was said to appear; only there was this difference, that he could easily step out of his upon the leads, whereas the neighbor's was about nine or ten feet higher. My father always vowed that he was perfectly sober when he went to bed. He couldn't tell how long he had been asleep, when he was suddenly wakened by loud screams; and when he opened his eyes, he saw that the opposite house was on fire. He was out on the leads in a moment. The haunted room was filled with bright flames, and at the window stood a lovely young woman, clasping a baby in her arms, and screaming for help.

"Oh! save my child! save my child!" she kept on crying in tones of such anguish that they went to my father's very heart.

"Give it to me," he said, "and then jump out into my arms. The distance is nothing—you cannot be hurt. Take courage. Now give me the baby."

She leaned forward, and dropped the baby, wrapped up in a shawl, into my father's arms. Just as he got it safe, it seemed to him that the roof fell in. There was a crashing noise, but not very loud; the flames disappeared, and so did the young lady. In at his window he rushed again, and through the house, shouting "fire! fire!" with all his might, and with the baby still in his arms. Out rushed the landlord as pale as a ghost, and his wife after him in such a monument of a night-cap, that it quite overawed my father even in the midst of his agitation. The maid was shrieking murder down in the kitchen, and the apprentices had tumbled out from under the counter in the shop, and were poking their noses cautiously out, and kindly inquiring who was killing her; and on every landing up the stairs the lodgers were calling out to know what was the matter. There was altogether a terrific row in the place.

"The next house is on fire!" said my father.

"It's only the old story," said the landlord. "Run up stairs, my dear, and tell them it's a false alarm."

"But it is not a false alarm," says my father, "for I saw the flames, and I saw the roof fall in, and I fear that a lady is buried under the ruins. Why don't you come and help her? She had just dropped her child into my arms when the roof fell."

The landlady then first set eyes on the bundle, for her husband at that moment lighted a candle from the rushlight, which had very imperfectly illuminated the scene before.

"A baby!" says she.

"Yes," says my father; "and I think I'd better leave it with you, madam, while I go and endeavor to rescue the mother."

The woman did not speak, nor utter a sound, but she just lifted up the shawl from the child's face, and dropped down like a lump of lead upon the floor. Instead of attending to her, both my father and the landlord looked into the shawl. It contained the skeleton of an infant, wrapped up in the rags of what had once been very costly garments. My father felt very sick, and the landlord staggered back against the wall, and dropped the candlestick out of his hand. When the landlady fell (she was a tall, heavy woman, and gave the house a good shake) the maid screamed murder louder than ever, and the lodgers called out yet more energetically to know what was the matter. That frightened the landlord back into his senses, for he thought if they came down and saw what my father had got, it would frighten them all out of the house. So he caught up the candle, which luckily was not extinguished by the fall, and pushed my father with his bundle into the bed-room. Then he called out that it was only the strange gentleman had had the nightmare, and his wife had been frightened into a fainting fit. So they all went grumbling back to bed, and the man helped his wife into her room, where my father stood trembling and shaking, not having presence of mind enough to put down the bundle, and not even daring to look into it again.

The little skeleton was quietly buried the next day by an old sexton, who asked no questions, as he knew the landlord was a respectable householder; and so they all concluded that the ghost was satisfied, and that that was the reason why she never appeared again.

When my father examined the place closely by daylight, he saw evident marks of fire about the windows; but he was assured these were the remains of a fire that had happened there a great many years before. In short, the whole affair of the apparition seemed to shroud some fearful mystery, which was perfectly inexplicable. Some years after, when he was in London again, my father endeavored to find out the house in the hope of obtaining a clue to the mystery, but he could find nothing but a mass of ruins. That street and some others were just demolished, to make way for that which is now Regent street.

THE "GOOD FELLOW."

We cannot deny to the "good fellow" the most unbounded good nature; he is prodigal of what he possesses, but his generosity is of such an indiscriminate character that he invariably bestows his favors on the unworthy, and takes care, whether accidentally or designedly we leave to conjecture, that they all directly or indirectly contribute to his importance or popularity: so that the feeling in him is but a "bogus" one; it belongs to that species of equivocal kindness which injures both giver and receiver. He will waste and squander; but rarely unsolicited, stretches out his hand with half a dollar in it to a *poor* fellow-creature. Although a famous spender, he is a bad lender, unless it be to a crony like himself, laboring under the delusion that he is one of the best fellows alive. There are no meritorious features in a disposition like this; on the contrary, it exhibits a selfishness which would centre all enjoyment, all happiness, either in, or in the neighborhood of, himself, But it must not be taken for granted that the gentleman whom we are holding up to public view is utterly undeserving of the character of being free and open-hearted: quite the contrary; he has those qualities in some degree of perfection, and is ever ready, in his own circle, to bring them into active exercise. What ought to be complained of is, that they are never brought into requisition out of the limited region in which he moves, and only in that territory when the effort and the boon are in some way or another connected with himself, his pleasures, or his pursuits.

But we do not quarrel with the "good fellow" on this ground alone: we accuse him of a number of faults, and among the number, those grave ones—imprudence, carelessness, dissipation, and habitual laziness. The first charge is proved by the aimless character of his pursuits, and the awful indifference he displays towards the value of time. His imprudence is about the most prominent of his faults, for to that he is mainly indebted for his reputation of "good fellow;" and as to his carelessness, it is so proverbial, that it is his constant apology for any error he may commit, or scrape he may fall into, and earns for him the additional appellation of "poor fellow," applied to him on those occasions by false or affected sympathy. That he is dissipated, the very fact of his being a "good fellow" proves; for we never heard the epithet applied to any but an individual who had signalized himself in the school of irregularity. The phrase is wholly the "good fellow's;" few but those of his own class would be inclined to dispute its possession with him, for it is not only indicative of the faults we have mentioned, but of others, equally injurious and fatal in their effects. Laziness is the child of dissipation, as well as its parent; for the one is invariably the consequence of the other, and in both of them the "good fellow" is perfect; but in which of them he mostly excels it would be difficult to determine.

IT IS A FACT.—Health is getting to be vulgar, and is confined principally to servant girls. No "lady" can possibly plead guilty to "being well," without losing caste. Spinal complaints are just now in the ascendant—no female being considered "good society" who possesses sufficient strength to raise a smoothing iron.

How many young ladies are there who would be mortified to the last degree, if a frill or a collar or other parts of their dress were displaced, but who, on being deteoted in ignorance, even in the history of their own country, would own it without a blush.

WIT AND WISDOM.

ORIGINAL AND SELECTED—PREPARED EXPRESSLY FOR THE LEDGER BY GEO. D. PRENTICE.

In former times patriots prided themselves on their own poverty and the riches of the State. In modern times it would be easier to find a patriot rich enough to buy a king than a king not rich enough to buy a patriot.

A WESTERN publisher tells the public that they can take his paper cheaper than they can any otber. If they take it for nothing, they will take it for exactly what it is.

A FOOLISH consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall.

"MOTHER," said a little boy the other day, "why are orphans the happiest children on earth?" "They are not, my child. Why do you ask that question?" "Because they have no mothers to spank 'em."

A GENTLEMAN having a horse that ran away and broke his wife's neck, was told by a neighbor that he wished to purchase it for *his* wife to ride upon. "No," said the wrotch, "I intend to marry again myself."

"WHAT papers off my writing-desk are you burning there?" cried an author to the servant-girl. "Oh, only the paper what's all written over, sir; I baint touched the clean."

WHEN specimens of police stupidity are being so constantly brought before the public, we cannot see why the newspaper reports should be headed "Police *Intelligence*."

OVID relates that Daphne, when flying from Apollo, was changed into a laurel. How subtle is the allegory that all girls who avoid their lovers must be *green*.

THE policy that can strike only while the iron is hot will be overcome by the perseverance that can make the iron hot by striking.

THE master of a magnificent and splendidly furnished mansion should take care that he be not the one thing little amidst everything else that is great.

MISPLACED honors and titles are a splendid sign to a wretched inn; an illuminated frontispiece to a contemptible book; a lofty arch overshadowing a gutter.

THE gold-hunters at Pike's Peak now wish that the bright visions with which they set out had been *pro*-visions.

THE reason why whales frequent the Arctic seas is probably because they supply the "northern lights" with oil.

MEN should not be charitable beyond their means. There are exhausted givers as well as "exhausted receivers."

ONE of our sourrilous editors says he will no longer suffer himself to be trodden under foot. Then let him cease to be dirt.

HE that aspires to be the head of a party must see some appearances that do not exist, and be blind to some that do.

PEOPLE often say of a man that he is a cunning fellow. This can never be true, for, if he were, nobody could find it out.

PEDANTRY prides herself on being wrong by rules, while common sense is content to be right without them.

SINCERELY to aspire after virtue is to gain her, and zealously to labor after her wages is to receive them.

PRAYERS may not make the Deity more willing to give, but they make the supplicant more worthy to receive.

A FOOL admires likeness to himself; but, except in the case of fools, people are apt to fall in love with something unlike themselves.

MEDIOCRITY is always disgusting, except perhaps, mediocrity of staturo in a woman.

HONOR is unstable and seldom the same; for she feeds upon opinion and is as fickle as her food.

LAUGH at no man for his pug nose; you can never tell what may turn up.

THERE is not a mite but what thinks himself "the cheese."

AVARICE begets more vices than Priam did children, and like Priam, survives the whole of them.

CURRENT ITEMS.

A MERCHANT of this city sent his office boy to the bank the other day to draw three hundred and forty dollars in gold, on a check. The boy received the gold, and started for his employer's office, but had not gone far when a man caught him by the shoulder, and pointing to a policeman not far off told the lad that he must go with him, as he had passed off a forged check at the bank. The boy, being alarmed, offered to return the gold, which the man took and disappeared.

A WESTERN Editor who went to Pike's Peak a few months ago, writes home to his paper that it is the greatest humbug of the day, and that thousands of men now in that region are suffering indescribably from destitution. A mob of the victims lately hung two men who had been engaged for some months previous in writing glowing accounts of the "diggings" to eastern papers, for which letters they were paid by heartless speculators.

ONE recent morning, the clergymen of Madison, Wis., each found a ham on their door-steps. Each one thinking that the ham had been left by some friend, took it in. In a day or two it was found that the hams had been stolen from the college steward and distributed by the students, as a good joke, but the fact did not come out in time to save the bacon.

AT a Chinese eating-house in San Francisco, some guests thinking that the bread was poisoned, called the landlord's attention to the fact, when he coolly "tried it" on his own son, a boy nine years of age. He made him eat a large piece of the bread, and after watching the effect for some time he remarked, without the slightest trace of feeling, "boy no die—bread secure."

AN intoxicated carman, a few days since, drove furiously into a crowd of children that were playing near Madison Square; his horse knocked down a boy some six or eight years of age, and one of the cart wheels ran over him, breaking his right arm and injuring him so severely in the chest that his life is despaired of.

A TRAVELLER who has just returned from the "extreme North," says that in Spitzbergen last winter it was so cold that in a crowded hut the breath of the inmates would fall to the floor in flakes, and he burnt the stockings off his feet one terrible night without hardly feeling the heat.

THE grizzly bears of California seem to be unusually bold and ferocious this season. A couple of them came from the mountains to within a few miles of Marysville, not long since, and killed over six hundred dollars' worth of cattle and sheep belonging to a farmer on the road.

A FRENCH statistician computes that, in case the war in Europe should become general and last two years, there would be blood enough shed to float the fleets of Russia, England, France and the United States, with all their armaments and men complete. A rather tough calculation.

AT a recent military parade in Chester, S. C., a calf in an adjoining lot was so affected by the performances of a brass band, that it leaped and capered about, until it seemed to become frenzied by the excitement, and giving a few prodigious bounds into the air, it fell down dead.

A BARBER, who is "proud of his profession," announces that the prevailing custom of wearing all the hair that will grow on the face is ruining the professors of the tonsorial art, their receipts being thereby reduced some forty per cent.

A WEALTHY citizen of Scott county, Illinois, was sent to the Penitentiary several weeks since for committing an assault with intent to kill. The disgrace of his conviction and imprisonment so weighed upon him that he recently died from sheer depression of spirits.

BARON GOLDSMID, a relative of Jenny Lind's husband, recently died in England, leaving a fortune of fifteen millions of dollars. Could a person save, clear of all expenses, $100,000 per annum, he could accumulate such a fortune in one hundred and fifty years.

A NORWEGIAN cobbler some twenty years ago bought a piece of land near Chicago for twenty dollars, and a short time since he sold it for seventeen thousand dollars.

A MAN one hundred years of age was recently married at Ashley Falls, Mass., to a woman who had just reached her eighty-first year.

IN Newport, R. I., a few days ago, a child's hand, in a petrified state, was found in a barrel of lime which had come from Maine.

A BOY eight years of age, living in Hamilton, Canada West, recently drank a quart of whiskey, and expired in a few hours in great agony.